

Good Government Indian School

By

Bertha S. Williams



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with their mother at their head. There is a lady of some note in Monterey, who is the mother of twenty-two living children.

"There is a lady in the department below who has twenty-eight children, all living, in fine health, and who may share the 'envied kiss' with others yet to come. What a family—what a wife—what a mother! I have more respect for the shadow of that woman than for the living presence of the miucing being who raises a whole village if she has one child, and then puts it to death with sugar plums. A woman with one child is like a hen with one chicken; there is an eternal scratch about nothing."

A CALIFORNIA WEDDING.

"It is said the Californians are born on horseback; it may also be said they are married on horseback. The day the marriage contract is agreed on between the parties, the bridegroom's first care is to buy or borrow the best horse to be found in the vicinity. At the same time he has to get, by one of these means, a silver-mounted bridle, and a saddle with embroidered housings. This saddle must have, also, at its stern, a bridal pillion, with broad aprons flowing down the flanks of the horse. These aprons are also embroidered with silk of different colors, and with gold and silver thread. Around the margin runs a string of little steel plates, alternated with slight pendants of the same metal. These, as the horse moves, jingle like a thousand mimic bells.

The bride, also, comes in for her share in these nuptial preparations. The bridegroom must present her with at least six entire changes of raiment, nor forget, through any sentiment of delicacy, even the chemise. Such an oversight might frustrate all his hopes; as it would be construed into a personal indifference—the last kind of indifference which a California lady will forgive. He therefore hunts this article with as much solicitude as the Peri the gift that was to unlock Paradise. Having found six which are neither too full nor too slender, he packs them in rose-leaves and sends them to his lady as his last bridal present. She might naturally expect him to come next.

The wedding day having arrived, the two fine horses, procured for the occasion, are led to the door, saddled, bridled, and pillioned. The bridegroom takes up before him the godmother, and the godfather the bride, and thus they gallop away to church. The priest, in his richest robes, receives them at the altar, where they kneel, partake of the sacrament, and are married. This over, they start on their return—but now the gentlemen change partners. The bridegroom, still on the pillion, takes up before him his bride. With his right he steadies her on the saddle, and in his left holds the reins. They return to the house of the parents of the bride, where they are generally received with a discharge of musketry. Two persons, stationed at some convenient place, now rush out and seize him by his legs, and before he has time to dismount, deprive him of his spurs, which he is obliged to redeem with a bottle of brandy.

"The married couple then enter the house where the near relatives are all waiting in tears to receive them. They kneel down before the parents of the lady, and crave a blessing, which is bestowed with patriarchal solemnity. On rising, the bridegroom makes a signal for the guests to come in, and another for the guitar and harp to strike up. Then commences the dancing, which continues often for three days, with only brief intervals for refreshment, but none for slumber; the wedded pair must be on their feet; their dilemma furnishes food for good-humored jibes and merriment. Thus commences married life in California."

IN A GOVERNMENT INDIAN SCHOOL.

BY BERTHA S. WILKINS.



THE Pima Indian Reservation is situated along the Gila river in southern Arizona. Here a Government boarding school has been in operation for a number of years, and better conditions for studying the Indian child can hardly be imagined. The children are still linked to the home, parents and friends can come to see them, yet, for the time being, they are entirely in the care and keeping of the school.

One has here the little native with all his physical wants to be satisfied, with his temper uncontrolled, and with but vague ideas of concentration or obedience to strangers. When the first strangeness has worn off and one has accustomed oneself to the picturesque "Indian English," the uniform brown of the faces and the black of hair and eyes (there is said to be only one half-breed Pima), one sees the child—the same in all ages and with all peoples—hungry in body and mind. The child, with all his limitations, which are such an unfailing source of amusement to us, yet with possibilities that make one almost stand in awe of him.

In my school, the "receiving class," consisting of twenty-six little Pimas and two Papagos, some familiar school types soon become clearly defined. The child most conspicuous by his behavior was Little Mischief, of course. He is a wonderfully bright, mercurial little fellow, and though only five years old has learned the art of winning hearts. Then Cry Baby made himself known. The slightest affront, whether real or fancied, sends this hysterical little brown archin off into paroxysms of tears and screams. Yet he is unusually bright, coming from a "brainy" family. His brothers are making their mark in higher Indian schools.

Then there's Puck, the naughty clown—a natural little buffoon—who always feels inclined to do what he shouldn't, never what he should. Yet such a generous, helpful little fellow is bound to make friends

everywhere. He has, moreover, a great deal of self-respect.

Even the mathematicians are not wanting. They are two splendid, manly fellows. The boy who was born a politician, who never needed to learn the art of "getting a pull," is perhaps most conspicuous in games where the children "choose their successors." He knows how to electioneer for



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"MINNENAH" AND "LITTLE OLD WOMAN."

Illustrated from Kodaks by the author

himself, even going so far as buying prominence with a top, a string or a marble. One might think of this consummate little schemer as "long-headed," were his not such a perfectly round little Pima pate.

The General Favorite or Popular Boy is here, as elsewhere, a genial, obliging little fellow, blessed by a kindly star, with unflinching tact, a keen sense of humor, and a level head. He is not puffed up by his popularity. The boys show their high regard for him in many frank, boyish ways, while the girls are more likely to send him a sweaty handful of parched pumpkin seeds by some convenient go-between. The Popular Boy receives the gift with a beaming smile, entirely devoid of self-consciousness, and distributes the delicacy to all around.

Among the girls, the Little Old Woman is a noticeable child. She is fussy and much concerned as to the welfare and behavior of each in particular and all in general.

Then there's the Rebel, who holds her head high and has a cool way of folding her arms, which reminds one of the Douglass before his speech to Marmion. Yet the Rebel possesses a voice as clear as a bell and unerring musical perception. After the music lesson is over, have been sung, the Lena sing again! The are perhaps the most vigorous measures are ashamed of their variable genius is a little lass of her to learn to read composition was a de- is very popular, too, alike, though the most is the Little Sensitive. natural refinement and teachable, with unflinching what her ancestors were neration a hundred years ago. The little maids from camp differ greatly in their power to adjust themselves to the new life. "Minnehaha," a dusky beauty of fifteen, opened her eyes in wonder. Knives and forks made her smile and she was slow in learning the use of them. Pencil and paper, blackboard and crayon also amused and interested her greatly—but she soon drooped with homesickness and refused to eat the strange fare of the school.

Hallie, "a genuine little savage," took in the new world with her eager little mind and smiled a wondering, yet determined, question at every thing. She was not only teachable but aggressively so, and in four months she has accomplished as much as a remarkably bright white child could possibly have done under the same circumstances. And this is saying much, as those who have seen German or Scandinavian children learn the language, besides doing the regular primary work, will admit.

Little Alice, under exactly the same conditions, has little power of concentration, but sings so sweetly and enjoys life so much that one is tempted to let her go her own smiling little way.

As far as I have observed, these little Pimas are



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IN THE AGENT'S ROOM

very musical. They enjoy, moreover, the thoughtful part of music study. Their "musical imagination" is easily aroused, and they appreciate keenly the language of a "song without words." They feel the minor pathos of intervals, and delight in the study of expressing feeling in music. Their voices do not have the silvery quality of the white child's voice, nor the rich resonance of the young Negro's; yet



Mauward-Collier Eng. Co. BRIDGE ACROSS THE LITTLE GILA.

under training they develop a quality of tone which is quite distinctive and charming.

Games, too, are an unfailing source of delight to these children. The "play spirit" bubbles over just as it does with children the world over. At school the girls play the familiar "tag" games, jump rope, bean bag, etc.; the boys make tops, play marbles or ball. When asked about their games at home, they said joyously, living it all over in memory: "Play with a bow! Ride a horse! Ride a burro! Ride a cow! Ride a calf!"

"Do you ride on a cow?"

"Yaas—ride—go very fast!"

"But don't you fall off?"

"Yaas, Robert fall off. Break himself here!" (Arm.)

"What do the girls play at home?"

But the girls are not so ready to tell.

"Make play-house of little sticks. Make doll of little sticks!" suggested Little Mischief, whose tongue wags at both ends. The girls seem to have fewer games than the boys. It is customary among the Indians, as among more enlightened peoples, to make a decided difference in the rearing of the sexes. Girls learn early to care for the little ones and help in the housework, so their life is more serious from the first.

"When I am at home, I help my mama make pinole," essayed the Sulker, who is learning to keep in good humor for a whole half day at a time.

"How do you make pinole?"



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ANDREW, THE SERGEANT.



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"PUCK" AND "CRY-BABY"

"Take wheat. Put it in olla. Put water on. Let little while get very hot on the fire. Then put on something like sheet; little while get dry—not very dry. Then put in olla, no water. Put on fire not let it burn; do dis-a-way. Then my mama put it on stoue make like flour. Very tired she get, my mama. I help her!"

"Very good to eat, dat pinole!" remarked a boy approvingly.

I strolled into the little boys' dormitory on a Sunday evening lately, and found the youngsters going to bed.

"Why aren't all these little boys in church?" I asked.

"Company C get slippy. Company C in bed!" came in a rollicking chorus. Then the Popular Boy turned the tables by asking archly, yet with the smile of a Chesterfield, "Why *you* not in church?" The goodnatured roar which greeted this sally proved to me that the stoical (?) Indian boy knows a joke when he meets it.

A "Gila monster" drawn upon the blackboard, called forth a chorus of, "I see him in the mountains!" "I kill him with a stoue. Long time throw stoues, my papa!" "He bite, you will die!"

In the "thinking game" the following original riddles were pronounced:

"I am thinking of something; it is on the school house. It is red, white and blue!"

"I am thinking of something. It is black. Say Z-Z-Z. Make a little honey in the ground!" A small hole in the ground betrays the spot where the large desert bee stores his sweets in the spring time. The children take a sharp stick and dig from four to eight inches deep, until they reach the small oval mud case. If finished, it will be carefully sealed, containing an egg and honey to feed the embryo. The children remove this and suck the honey from the cap beneath.

Cry Baby one day surprised us by the following riddle: "I am thinking of something. It is playing in the mountains with a bow. I will go and kill it!" To little Pimas there was but one answer to that; and, "Pache! Pache!" came from boys and girls alike.

Twenty-five years ago the final treaty of peace was made between the Pimas and Apaches. During the foregoing winter the Apaches had made several raids upon their arch-enemies, the thrifty Pimas, who had been tillers of the soil and skillful irrigators for centuries. But the Apaches met their Waterloo at last, so far as the Pimas were concerned. Coming down through "Apache Gap" in great numbers, they found the Pimas waiting for them, safely ensconced behind breastworks. A fierce battle followed, in which the Apaches were routed and the terms of peace, made under the auspices of the Government during the following June, were strictly observed by both tribes afterwards. But hatred is still warm in every little Pima's breast, and the threat which Cry Baby had made in his riddle found an echo in every heart.

A giant cactus drawn upon the blackboard aroused the imagination of the children greatly; but they were by no means satisfied with it. They wanted to finish the picture. So the dull green giant was soon radiant with red fruit. "I will make a boy with a big steek! He will pick the cactus-fruit!" "I will make a basket—he take some cactus-fruit to his mama!" "I will make his hat—it fall off!" they volunteered eagerly; and the result was highly realistic, to say the least.

But boarding school life is by no means all sunshine to the children. For one thing, they are "raised in a batch," and that is hard. One has no time to draw them close, and let the little natures throw their tendrils around one—there are too many. The food, too, is strange and monotonous, and the children often long for the savory game stew, the delicious pinole mush, the cactus-fruit syrup, or even the stewed pumpkin which they have had at home. Then there are often tragedies—a large number of these children are orphans.

"Save's mama is dade! Who will tell Save?" asked Joana, the girls'

sergeant, coming into the sitting-room. "The horse ran away with her—the engine run over her out at Salt River! Who will tell Save?"

"Tell Carma first—that is her sister!" suggested one of the older girls. And Carma, the sixteen-year-old sister of "Save's mama," was called in. Before Save came, Joana went out to call Save's two brothers, Lisle and José, who were also in the school. There they stood, the three motherless children, wondering and curious, yet uneasy and puzzled by their aunt's grief. At last the awful truth was upon them. Little Save, half stunned, held Carma's hand and laid her head helplessly upon the other's shoulder. All the girls wept with the mourners, and some crept out to "cry it off alone."

After staring blankly about for some time, the boys had mechanically followed the call of the bell and marched into the dining-room with the lines. Lisle, a manly boy of fifteen, attempted to eat; but after choking several times, he sat back, making a desperate effort to control himself. When excused from the room, he stood afar off beside a tree. At last he gave way entirely, and throwing his arm around the tree, he burst into an uncontrollable storm of tears. The boys seemed to respect his grief, and left him undisturbed.

One cannot but be apprehensive for these children when one thinks of their future. So many days of weal or woe must be lived, and woe is none the less real when in the obscurity of an Indian camp. The question with all who have the welfare of the Indian at heart must be, "What are we doing to give these splendid children of Nature the best and only the best which they need from our civilization?"

There is in all communities a strong law-abiding and law-making element—it is the backbone of the civil and social life; this is true of the Pimas. There are families here who have it within them to appreciate and live up to the highest conception of right and the noblest moral principles of our time. Are we giving them this true civilization, or do we show them a miserable caricature, at which they smile and turn away mystified?

However, when Andrew, one of the sergeants, was asked as to whether he was glad that he had gone to school, he said: "Yes, I am glad I went. My brother stayed at home. He wears long hair, and maybe has a good time, but when he needs medicine or something, he comes to me, because I can speak English and read and write!"

Joana, the girls' sergeant, said: "Yes, I am glad I have been at school, but now I am homesick—this summer I will not work, I will go home to my mama down in the Papago country."



C. M. Davis Eng. 1-1

DRAWINGS BY YOUNG PIMAS



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J. T. Bertrand, Official Photographer

The great church at the Mission San Fernando is roofed! The Landmarks Club feels like throwing up its hat, for there was little hope that this big contract could be completed before the winter rains; and another wet season on those crumbling adobe walls would have left little to save. But a good many people have been enlightened and generous, and the work is thus far along. The church roof is only of shakes, but the structure is strong enough to carry tiles, and meanwhile will protect the building for twenty years. The Club doesn't believe it will be so long as that before someone will have the money and the public spirit to put tiles on—a matter of say \$1200. The club is also "short" of about \$100 to pay for the roof already on.

The Monastery is now re-roofed, its cloisters repaired, and the enormous breach in its northern wall is closed. Now it is necessary to fill gaps in the church walls, so the wind cannot get under that huge roof and carry it off; the buildings running from the Monastery to the church must be roofed, the old pillars set up, and many other things done. The Club needs more money to continue the good work; and this means a call on all lovers of beauty.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORK:

Previously acknowledged, \$2983.06.

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C. S. Hogan, material and work, \$20; Rev. W. F. Chichester, \$5; Los Angeles Sewer Pipe Assn. (material), \$5.

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